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ABSTRACT

This executive summary of Wisconsin's 5-year state improvement plan outlines goals and objectives for improving special education services to students with disabilities and progress toward these objectives in Year 2. The first goal (students with disabilities will demonstrate skills that will engage them to become independent, productive, and included citizens in society) contains objectives that address graduation rates and participation and performance on statewide achievement tests. The second goal (students with disabilities will have supportive learning environments and resources to help all student become caring, contributing, and responsible citizens) contains objectives that relate to participation in the regular education environment and the decrease of suspension rates of students with disabilities. The third goal (students with disabilities will receive individualized planning and appropriate instruction from qualified staff) contains objectives relating to knowledge and skills of educators, training for paraprofessionals, and knowledge of eligibility criteria. The last goal (students with disabilities will have a foundation for learning and successful transitions enhanced by collaborative partnerships among families, schools, and communities) contains objectives relating to interagency cooperation. The report contains pie charts and graphs charting statistics on student placement, graduation, assessment participation, suspension rates, and teacher licensure. (CR)

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State Improvement Plan for Children with Disabilities. Executive Summary 2001.

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State Superintendent
Elizabeth Burmaster

Executive Summary 2001

State Improvement Plan

FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A Message from the State Superintendent

In July 2001, as I assumed my responsibilities as the new State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I made a promise to the citizens of Wisconsin. The New Wisconsin Promise focuses on leadership, advocacy, and accountability. It is centered around collaboration and ensures the opportunity of a quality education for every child. The State Improvement Plan for Children with Disabilities is aligned with The New Wisconsin Promise as demonstrated on the following pages. I have made a commitment to bring people together around our shared value and responsibility to put our children and their education first. This pledge includes children with special educational needs. Let us come together to touch the lives of all children in order to have a positive impact on their futures. Working with our collaborative partners to create long-lasting system changes and positive results takes time, but in the end we will improve outcomes for children with disabilities. I look forward to working for and with all of you on behalf of the children of Wisconsin to accomplish our goals.

Vision

The State Improvement Plan (SIP) is the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) vehicle for planning and providing statewide direction and leadership in the education of children with disabilities. The SIP was developed over a two-year period under the supervision of the State Superintendent's Council on Special Education. The DPI's vision is to prepare students with disabilities for postsecondary education or satisfying employment and a level of independent living that is uniquely appropriate for each individual by working together with our collaborative partners.

Update

The SIP is the mechanism that the DPI, Regional Service Networks (RSNs), Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs), school districts, parents, and other interested stakeholders use to focus their discussion on improving outcomes for students. As modeled in the plan, concerned individuals from all walks of life are beginning to gather around the same table with educators in local communities to analyze their data, determine what they mean, identify the barriers for improvement, and develop a plan to promote positive results for children. In this executive summary, you will see examples of how the SIP is being used in this regard. Included are updates on the progress that our children are making, as well as areas that need more improvement. The SIP is a means for achieving improvement. Over time, positive trends in education and student outcomes will be the result.

INSIDE:

Mission 2

Goal One 3-5
Students in Society
- Prevalence
- WKCE Data
- Graduation Rates
- Post High School

Goal Two 6-7
Supports for Learning
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Dropout
- Environments

Goal Three 8-9
Quality Staff
- Data Retreats
- Paraprofessionals
- Vacancies
- Teaching Standards
- Emergency Licensure

Goal Four 10-11
Collaborative Partnerships
- Transition
- Early Childhood
- Local Educational Agencies
- Parent-Educator Initiative

SIP Logo 12

EC 309180

DPI Mission
The New Wisconsin Promise

Leadership, Advocacy, and Accountability
To ensure the opportunity of a quality education for every child by uniting as a community around our shared value and responsibility to put our children first.

Special Education Team Mission

To provide statewide leadership, advocacy, technical assistance, and promote collaboration among parents, educators, students, communities, and other agencies to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education.

The New Wisconsin Promise

Narrowing the achievement gap Smaller class sizes Improved reading	Educational accountability Citizens who contribute to their commmunities	Quality teachers and administrators	Parent and community involvement

State Improvement Plan for Children with Disabilities IDEA Sec. 653(a)(2)

The State Improvement Plan (SIP) is the DPI's vehicle for planning and providing statewide direction and leadership in the education of children with disabilities. The vision is to prepare students with disabilities for postsecondary education or satisfying employment and a level of independent living that is uniquely appropriate for each individual by working together with our collaborative partners.

GOAL ONE	GOAL TWO	GOAL THREE	GOAL FOUR
Students in Society *Students with disabilities will continually develop skills that will enable them to become independent, productive, and included citizens in society.*	**Supports for Learning** *Students with disabilities will have supportive learning environments and resources to encourage all students to become caring, contributing, and responsible citizens.*	**Quality Staff** *Students with disabilities will receive individualized planning and appropriate instruction from qualified staff.*	**Collaborative Partnerships** *Students with disabilities will have a foundation for learning and successful transitions enhanced by collaborative partnerships among families, schools, and communities.*

GOAL ONE

Students in Society

Students with disabilities will continually develop skills that will enable them to become independent, productive, and included citizens in society.

Objectives:

1.1 The percentage of students with disabilities who participate in the general education curriculum and statewide standardized assessments will increase.

1.2 The percentage of students with disabilities who score at the proficient or advanced performance level on statewide standardized assessments will increase.

1.3 The quality of education will improve so that all students will meet high standards for academic performance and personal behavior, thus reducing referral rates for special education.

1.4 The percentage of students with disabilities who exit high school with a diploma will increase.

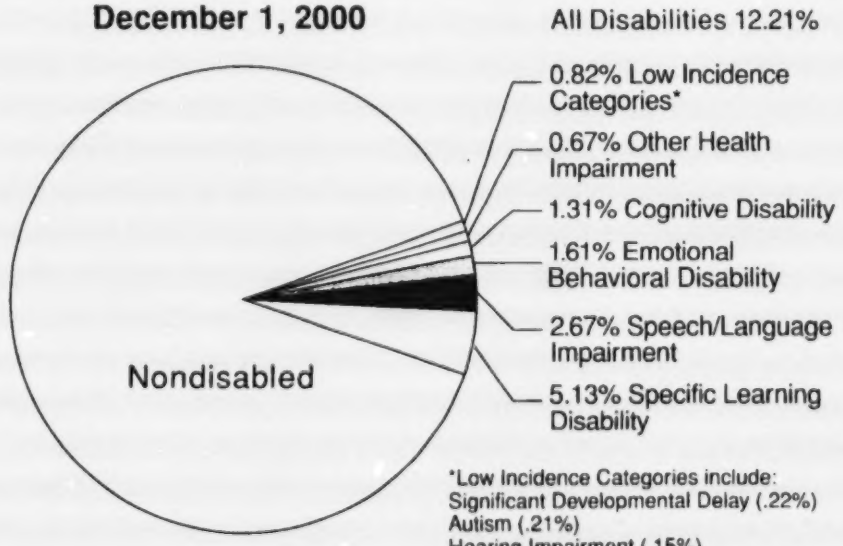
1.5 The percentage of students with disabilities who are employed or participating in postsecondary education three years after leaving high school will increase.

1.6 The percentage of students with disabilities who are living independently or in assisted living arrangements three years after leaving high school will increase.

Prevalence of Disabilities

The prevalence of students with disabilities on December 1, 1999, was 11.78%. For the first time, the prevalence rate on December 1, 2000, as shown at the right, included students reported by the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services. If those students were factored out in order to compare the results with the previous year, a prevalence rate of 12.17% would result. The number of students with disabilities continues to increase.

December 1, 2000

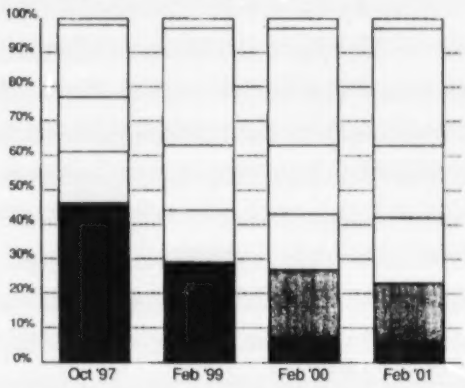


*Low Incidence Categories include:
Significant Developmental Delay (.22%)
Autism (.21%)
Hearing Impairment (.15%)
Orthopedic Impairment (.16%)
Visual Impairment (.04%)
Traumatic Brain Injury (.03%)
Deaf-blind (<.01%).

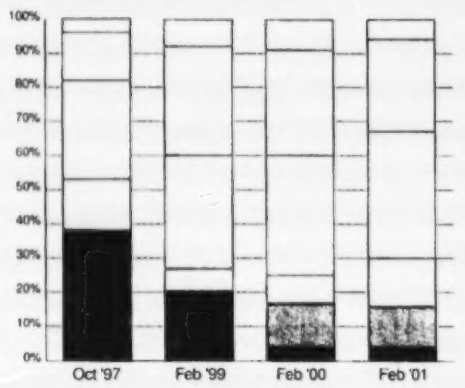
Statewide Achievement Test Results for Students with Disabilities

Known as the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE), the statewide achievement tests are part of the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS). These tests are given annually to students in grades four, eight, and ten. The WKCE measures achievement in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies. For the February 2000 test, the category of alternate assessment was added, which is considered a prerequisite skill level. Overall, the percentage of students with disabilities participating in the WSAS has increased over the years. The graphs at the right show performance levels of students with disabilities in reading and mathematics over a four-year time period. The goal is to see increases from minimum to basic, from basic to proficient, and from proficient to advanced performance levels as well as a decrease in no WSAS and prerequisite level. Generally speaking, these trends are occurring.

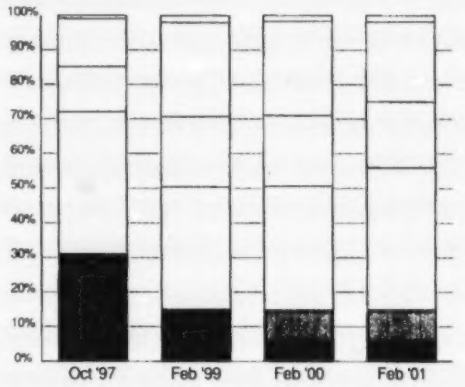
4th Grade Reading



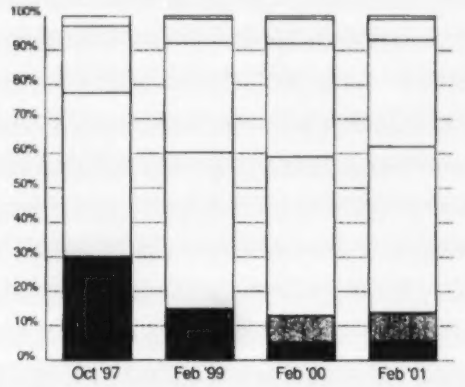
4th Grade Mathematics



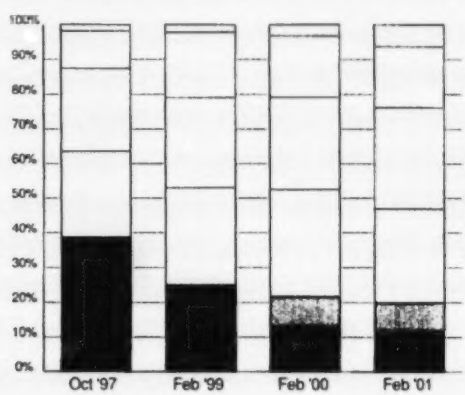
8th Grade Reading



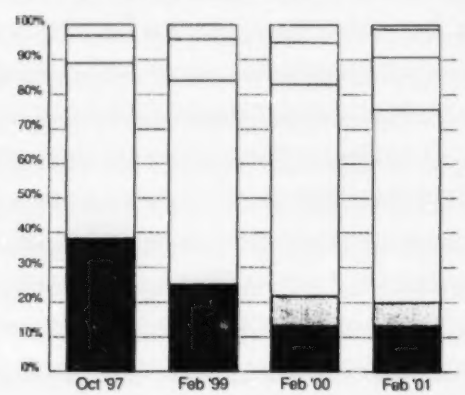
8th Grade Mathematics



10th Grade Reading



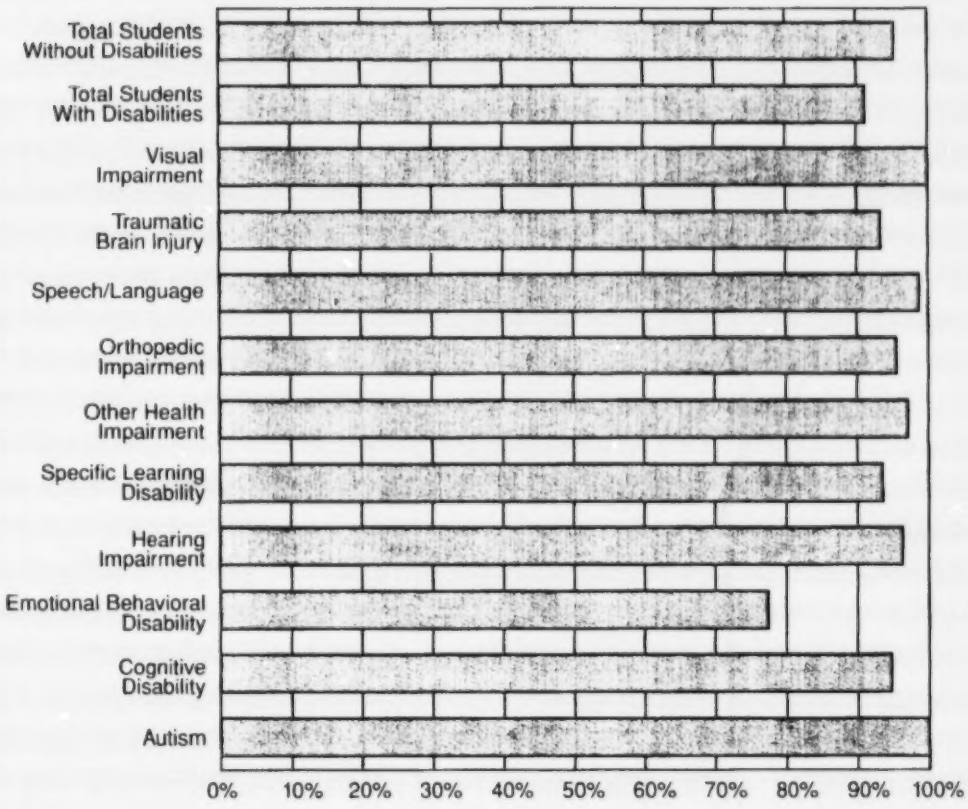
10th Grade Mathematics



No WSAS | **Pre-requisite** | **Minimal** | **Basic** | **Proficient** | **Advanced**

Graduation Rates

The 1999-2000 graduation rates are calculated using data from the School Performance Report (SPR), which serves as the state's annual public school report card. For the first time, information was reported on the SPR by disability. In previous years, graduation rates of students with disabilities were calculated using data from the Federal Child Count and are not comparable to this new data collection. Using the SPR allows comparison of the graduation rate of students with disabilities to students without disabilities. Although graduation rates vary by disability area, overall 91.09% of students with disabilities graduated during the 1999-2000 school year compared to 95.39% of students without disabilities.



Post High School Follow-up Study

5239 students with disabilities successfully exited high school in Wisconsin between December 1999 and December 2000. The statewide Post High School Follow-up Study examined the outcomes of a small (7%), representative sample of these former students specifically addressing their participation in postsecondary education, current employment, and independent living. Results show that the majority of the youth are either employed or attending postsecondary school, or both. Mini-grants were awarded to school districts to conduct local follow-up studies during the 2001-2002 school year.

2000 Statewide Results:

- 80% of the students in the study are employed. 42% are employed only and another 38% are employed and attend postsecondary education.
- 64% of the youth work more than 37 hours/week.
- 57% of the employed youth earn at least $7.00 per hour.
- 47% of the students participate in postsecondary education. 8% attend postsecondary education only and another 38% attend postsecondary education and are employed (see above).
- 12% of the youth neither are employed nor attend postsecondary education; 88% of the youth are either employed or attending postsecondary education, or both.
- 76% of the students continue to live at home with their parents.

GOAL TWO

Supports for Learning

Students with disabilities will have supportive learning environments and resources to encourage all students to become caring, contributing, and responsible citizens.

Objectives:

2.1 The percentage of preschoolers with disabilities who receive special education related services in inclusive settings will increase.

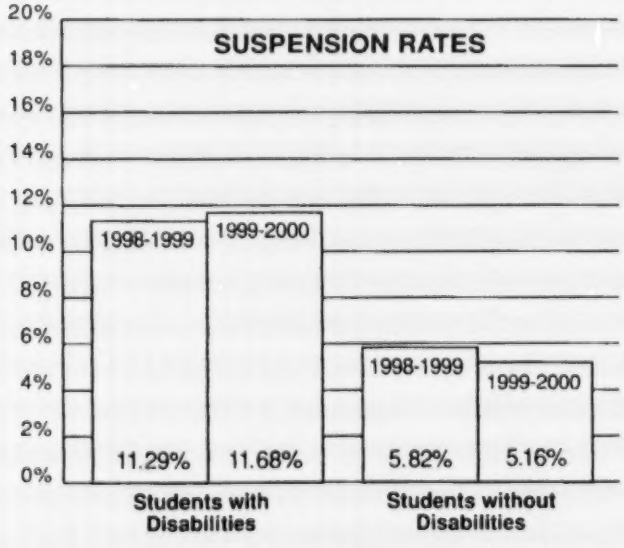
2.2 The percentage of students with disabilities who participate in the regular education environment with supplementary aids and services to the maximum extent appropriate as determined by the IEP team will increase.

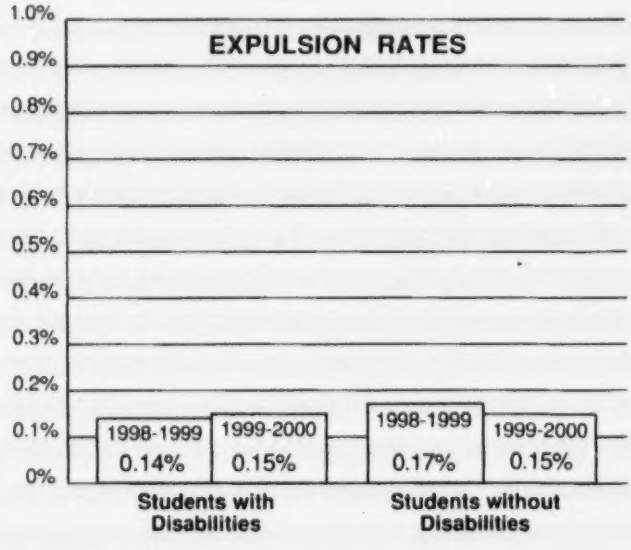
2.3 The percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school will decrease.

2.4 The number of students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled will decrease.

Suspension, Expulsion, and Dropout

Suspension rates for students with disabilities increased less than four-tenths of a percent the last two years while suspension rates for students without disabilities decreased by seven-tenths of a percent. The percentage of students with disabilities that are suspended (11.68%) is more than twice the rate as for students without disabilities (5.16%). The expulsion rate for students with disabilities increased slightly (0.01%) the last two years, but is equal to the expulsion rate for students without disabilities. The 1999-2000 dropout rate for students without disabilities was 2.66% compared to 2.24% for students without disabilities. The dropout rate was not collected by disability the previous year and is therefore unavailable for comparison.

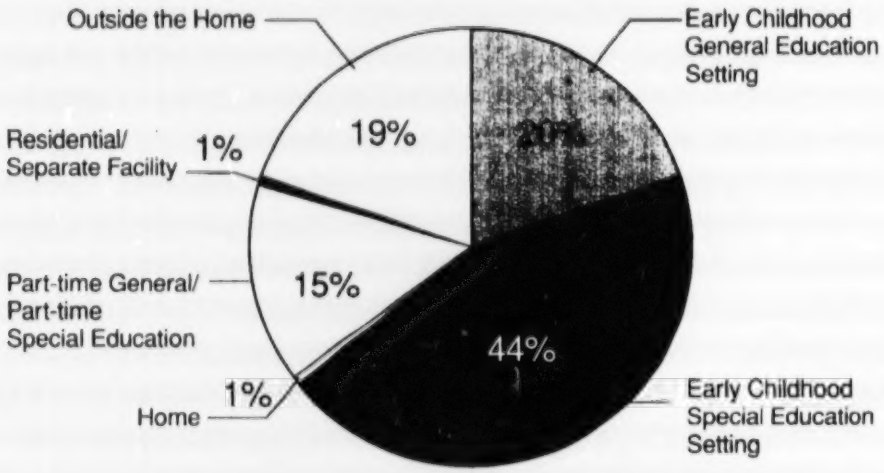




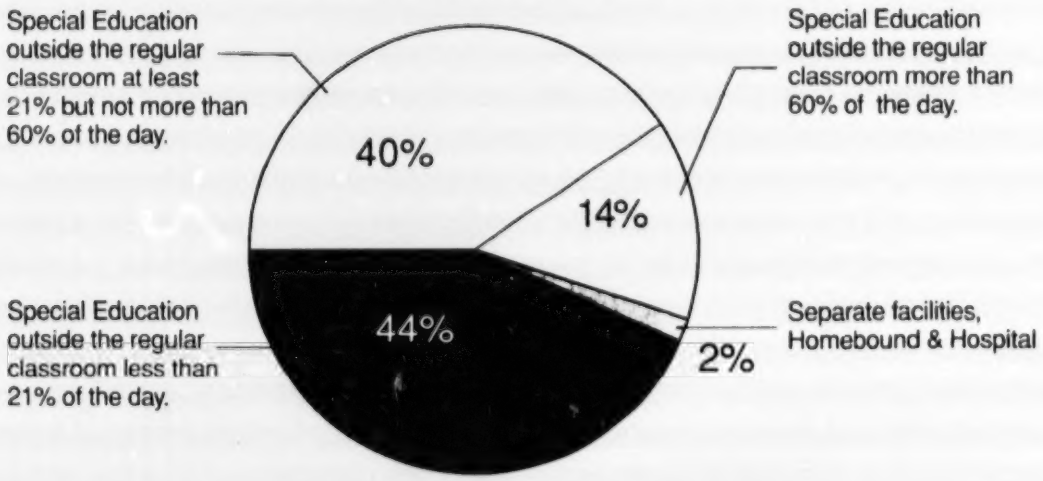
Education Environment December 2000

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities are educated with their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Students in special education can only be removed to separate classes or schools when the nature or severity of their disabilities is such that they cannot receive an appropriate education in a regular education classroom with supplementary aids and services. In Wisconsin, most young children ages 3-5 continue to be served in the early childhood special education setting. More students ages 6-21 were served in regular education classrooms during the 2000-2001 school year than in previous years.

Children Ages 3-5



Students Ages 6-21


Special Education outside the regular classroom at least 21% but not more than 60% of the day.
40%
Special Education outside the regular classroom more than 60% of the day.
14%
Special Education outside the regular classroom less than 21% of the day.
44%
2%
Separate facilities, Homebound & Hospital

GOAL THREE

Quality Staff

Students with disabilities will receive individualized planning and appropriate instruction from qualified staff.

Objectives:

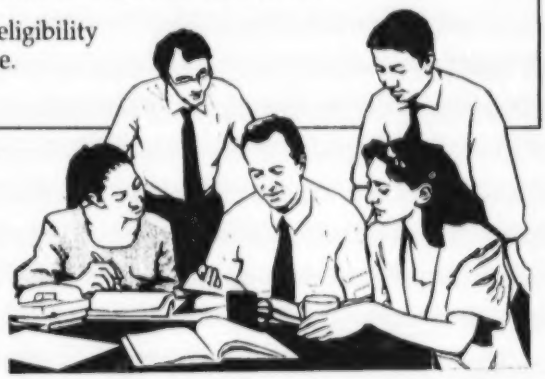
3.1 The number of special education teachers and related service personnel in disability areas of greatest need will increase.

3.2 The knowledge and skills of regular and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and administrators to improve educational results for children with disabilities will increase.

3.3 In cooperation with special education teachers, disabilities training for paraprofessionals involved in the provision of services for students with disabilities will increase.

3.4 The number of school district special education staff that participate in Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs) statewide data retreats will increase.

3.5 The knowledge of state special education eligibility critera and proper application will increase.



Data Retreats

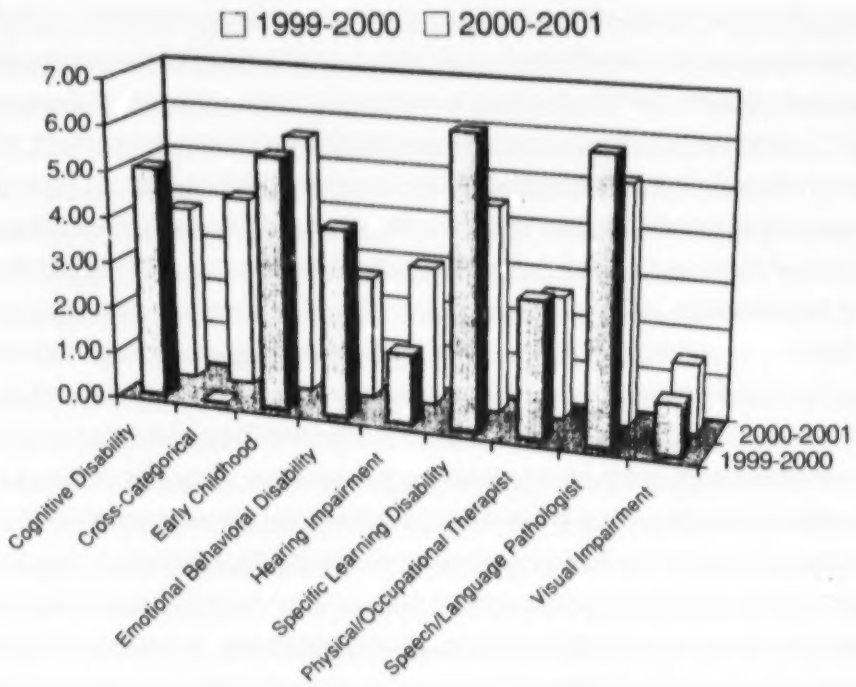
As some districts evaluate their special education and related services to identify needs and develop a plan to address the needs [Wis. Stats. Ch. 115.77(4)(j)], they are beginning to participate in data retreats in an effort to systematically dig deeper into their data, peel back the layers, and gain greater understanding of the needs. Data retreats are opportunities for district and school teams, composed of parents, school personnel, and community members, to analyze outcome data and develop a data-based improvement plan. An important step in the improvement planning process is the examination of local data in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and determine future goals, objectives, and strategies. The CESAs have developed a format for conducting data retreats and may be contacted for more information about local data retreat processes that are currently in place. This same process of data analysis is also being used to determine statewide strengths and weaknesses and update the State Improvement Plan for Children with Disabilities.

Paraprofessionals in Wisconsin

Paraprofessionals who serve students with disabilities play an essential role on Wisconsin's educational teams. Approximately 7300 special education paraprofessionals were employed by Wisconsin school districts during the 2000-2001 school year. The Wisconsin DPI has taken a strong interest in the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals. Specifically, the Wisconsin Paraprofessional Task Force initiative continues to build support systems for the Wisconsin paraprofessional workforce. This task force has brought about important statewide linkages, pre-service and in-service training, and role clarification for the paraprofessional in our school districts. Other efforts to promote and support paraprofessional development include an annual statewide conference, paraprofessional mini-grants to CESAs, research and training materials, and skill building resources for teachers and administrators to enhance their training and support for paraprofessionals.

Ratio of Applicants to Vacancies

The ratio of applicants to vacancies for all areas of education (both special and regular) ranged from 1.5 to 19.82 during the 2000-2001 school year compared to 1.11 to 36.44 the previous year. Four areas in special education areas experienced three or fewer applicants per vacancy. Visual impairment (VI) had the fewest, followed by physical/occupational therapist, emotional behavioral disability, and hearing impairment (HI). There has been some improvement in the ratio of applicants to vacancies in the areas of VI, HI, and early childhood over the last two years; all other special education areas experienced a decline (with the exception of cross-categorical, which is a new area of licensure this year).



Professional Teaching Standards

Thirty-nine teachers from Wisconsin earned national certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, two of whom are in special education. This award is a symbol of professional teaching excellence. The voluntary process includes rigorous performance assessment in which teachers document their knowledge and teaching skills. Congratulations to Jane Jacobson of the Neenah Joint School District, and Patricia Susami of the School District of Menomonee Falls, both nationally certified as *Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs Specialists*.

Emergency Licensure

In 2000-2001, DPI issued 2499 emergency licenses, 45% of which were in special education. This is an increase of 18% in emergency special education licenses since last year. More emergency licenses were issued in the areas of early childhood special education, cognitive disability, specific learning disability, and emotional behavioral disability than in previous years. Emergency licenses for emotional behavioral disability and specific learning disability were issued more frequently than for any other licensure area.

Number of Emergency Licenses Issued	'99-'00	'00-'01
Hearing Impairment	10	7
Early Childhood Special Education	51	64
Cognitive Disability	126	169
Specific Learning Disability	278	373
Speech/Language Impairment	39	25
Visual Impairment	7	0
Emotional Behavioral Disability	394	430

GOAL FOUR

Collaborative Partnerships

Students with disabilities will have a foundation for learning and successful transitions enhanced by collaborative partnerships among families, schools, and communities .

Objectives:

4.1 Collaboration among parents, regular and special educators, related service providers, and administrators in areas of school governance and the development of quality Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in a consensus-based manner will increase.

4.2 Collaboration with postsecondary educational institutions and service agencies will increase.

4.3 Collaboration among early intervention, childcare, Head Start, and school early childhood programs will increase system level partnerships.

The Wisconsin Statewide Transition Project

Counties in the Project	**24/72**
County Transition Advisory Councils	**44/72**
County Interagency Agreements	**39/72**
County Point of Entry Manuals	**28/72**
District Transition Action Teams	**51/426**
School Districts in the Project	**48/426**

Wisconsin is part of a national student outcomes project involving 18 other states that focuses on meeting IEP transition requirements. The Wisconsin Statewide Transition Project creates an infrastructure at the state, regional, and district levels which helps people to know what are the state and federal transition requirements for students with disabilities and how to meet them. Data is being collected statewide to demonstrate improvement and results related to meeting the transition planning needs of students with disabilities. The goal of the program is to create better awareness of program services, supports, and agencies through the development of County Transition Advisory Councils, School District Transition Action Teams, and the appointment of CESA transition coordinators.

Early Childhood Interagency Agreement and Collaboration

Collaboration continues to be a focus of early childhood efforts in the state. An interagency agreement was developed among DPI; Department of Health and Family Services; Head Start Region V, Migrant Bureau, and tribal programs. This new agreement supplements existing agreements by focusing on collaborations between the various Head Start branches and early intervention/special education programs. The *Preschool Options Project* is a DPI funded project that provides training to assist local school districts in developing a range of options in least restrictive environments for young children with disabilities. Many districts have a variety of programs within local schools and communities where children with disabilities can receive special education services while learning with typically developing peers. The goal is to increase services in these regular education settings. Many resources and training opportunities are provided via the project. Collaboration is also being promoted through the CESA 5 *Collaboratingpartners.com* website. The site highlights collaborative programs, provides information on transition as well as a variety of other topics, and promotes regional networks. Lapham Elementary School in the Madison Metropolitan School District is one example of a collaborative program where an itinerant teacher for early childhood has been assigned to work with a Head Start teacher. Astonishing outcomes for children are the result. The Milwaukee Early Childhood Council brings together collaborative partners to focus on the needs of young children in their community, as well. Families benefit from a seamless approach to early care and education.

Collaboration with Local Educational Agencies

Each year local educational agencies (LEAs) collaborate with parents to develop and review district Special Education Plans. This process includes a review of district data to determine areas of need to be addressed in the plan. Districts are free to accomplish this goal in a variety of ways. The Marshall School District will be utilizing their Village Partnership process as the vehicle to review their data and develop a district-wide strategic improvement plan. Some local educational agencies have chosen to align the goals specified in their district Special Education Plans with the goals in the *State Improvement Plan for Children with Disabilities*. The Necedah School District, for instance, specifies in their Special Education Plan that the district will work on increasing student participation in the general curriculum and statewide standardized assessments, with the additional goal of more participating students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels. Training will be provided in data analysis and general best practice use of special education modifications and accommodations to help accomplish these goals. Other districts, such as the Alma School District, participated in a three day "Renaissance II" workshop hosted by CESA #4 to focus on data analysis, data driven decision making, and comprehensive planning for school improvement.

Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI)

Working with each CESA in the past year, WSPEI helped districts to start or renew local special education advisory councils that include parents of children with disabilities. These councils are important for giving training and information to other parents, helping the district develop its Special Education Plan, and bringing together teachers and parents to talk about special education in their community. A parent hired and trained by the district or CESA often plays a key role in helping the council decide what it needs to do and how to do it. WSPEI has helped to increase the number of special education parent liaisons from about 25 to 47, and the number continues to grow. People from every school district in the state can talk with a trained parent liaison about how to increase partnerships with parents of children with disabilities. District and CESA parent liaisons help parents and educators understand each other's point of view and solve problems in a positive way. They also help districts give training and support to other parents.

Last year, in a survey answered by administrators from 60% of the school districts in Wisconsin, almost half of them said their district offered training about IEP team participation to parents. More training opportunities are available to parents now than in the past, according to Parent Training and Information center data. WSPEI works with the Parent Training and Information centers and other agencies to support successful parent-school partnerships. One example of this collaboration is Parents in Partnership, an intensive leadership training given to over 80 parents in the past year, an increase from 50 parents in the previous year. WSPEI staff also meets with leaders in other statewide initiatives and federally funded projects to better inform parents about youth in transition, preschool options, assistive technology, and eligibility for special education.

Visions for Success

The graphic at right illustrates how the four goals of the SIP contribute to improving results for students with disabilities. The student is found at the center. Supports for learning and quality staff are encircled by collaborative partnerships, all of which are necessary for students to achieve success in society. The SIP is a five-year plan for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. This executive summary represents the second year of implementation of the SIP. Each year the plan is reviewed in light of data about student outcomes and revised as appropriate. The State Superintendent's Council on Special Education continues to collaborate with the DPI on annual updates.

For More Information ...

- For more information about special education in Wisconsin, please visit the DPI website: http://www.dpi.state.wi.us.
- If you would like to obtain a copy of the State Improvement Plan for Children With Disabilities, contact the Special Education Team at the DPI , (608) 266-2899 or download a copy from the team website: http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/sip.html.
- You can also visit the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website through the DPI's homepage. This electronic resource has been created to help educators, parents, and community members who have an interest in educating the hearts and minds of all children. Sections labeled Standards and Assessment, Data Analysis, Continuous School Improvement, and Best Practices guide users to key local, state, and national information about success in education.

March 2002

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Madison, Wisconsin

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